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Invasion Plan or What?

The cloudy history of the Cuban invasion fiasco probably will be opened up for new post mortems by former President Eisenhower's remark that "there was absolutely no planning for an invasion in my Administration."

That is not precisely the way most Americans have heard the story of the invasion, nor is it the way the Kennedy Administration tells it. One Administration official says the former President is in error, that there were plans for an invasion while he was in office and that "there are documents to prove it."

Mr. Eisenhower's flat denial was amended, however, by something else he told freshmen Republican Congressmen visiting Gettysburg. He said that "we had done nothing except to recognize that these Cuban refugees had a great desire to go back to Cuba, so we began organizing them and giving them weapons."

If this effort did not mean invasion planning, what did it mean? Perhaps the answer lies in semantics. There is a difference between preparing forces for an invasion and making plans for an invasion by 1200 men at the Bay of Pigs on April 17. The CIA's invasion preparations which President Kennedy inherited are presumably permissible within the context of the Eisenhower rhetoric, without amounting to an invasion "plan." And perhaps what is a plan to one Administration is not a plan to another, and so on.

In view of Mr. Kennedy's full acceptance of responsibility for the decision on Cuba, further efforts to assess the exact degree of responsibility may seem a waste of time. Nevertheless, Mr. Eisenhower undoubtedly has handed historians a few more question marks.

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